



State of Connecticut
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

TO: Committee on Human Services
Representative Jillian Gilchrest and Senator Matthew Lesser, Co-Chairs

FROM: The Reproductive Rights Caucus
Representative Matt Blumenthal and Representative Jillian Gilchrest, Co-Chairs

DATE: February 23, 2023

RE: **Updated Testimony in Favor of Raised H.B. 6618, An Act Concerning Medical Assistance for Certain Persons Receiving Abortion Care and Related Services in Connecticut.**

Representative Gilchrest, Senator Lesser, Senator Gaston, Representative Dathan, Senator Seminara, Representative Case, and honorable members of the Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the General Assembly's Reproductive Rights Caucus, we thank you for this opportunity to **testify in strong support of raised House Bill 6618, An Act Concerning Medical Assistance for Certain Persons Receiving Abortion Care and Related Services in Connecticut.**

This bill is one of the Caucus's legislative priorities this session. It will support Connecticut's efforts to receive federal reimbursement for abortion care and related services through a Medicaid waiver under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act. It will thereby help ensure Connecticut healthcare providers receive funding for Medicaid-eligible individuals' abortion care in Connecticut, regardless of whether the patient is a resident of Connecticut or another state.

In doing so, it will remove a key financial burden for Connecticut healthcare providers at a time when abortion access is being restricted and banned at an alarming speed in some other states across the country. HB 6618 is also one part of a set of initiatives Connecticut has proposed to expand access to life-saving care while simultaneously supporting our state's obstetrician-gynecologists, midwives, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, and all other professionals who provide reproductive healthcare.

The data show New England states are seeing an increase in out-of-state abortion patients. Connecticut healthcare providers, in accordance with their professional and ethical obligations, are providing this safe and legal care regardless of the patient's ability to pay. In the seven months since the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's Connecticut health centers have seen a 30 percent increase in patients coming from states with abortion bans. Connecticut's providers

are bearing the weight of these bans, dedicating time, energy, and resources to people from across the country. This need is already affecting Connecticut and will only increase as more of these restrictions are enacted. HB 6618 addresses this by ensuring our providers are reimbursed for their services through Medicaid.

We are not alone in advocating for this initiative. It is also supported by a large coalition of stakeholders, providers, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which issued a memo in August 2022 stating its commitment to support states that request 1115 Medicaid waivers.¹ This session, we hope this Committee will help ensure that HB 6618 is one of Connecticut's tools to address the reproductive health crisis unfolding in this country.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Matt Blumenthal", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Representative Matt Blumenthal, Co-Chair
On behalf of the Reproductive Rights Caucus

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/hhs-letter-to-governors-reproductive-health-care.pdf>